

Dear Students,

Welcome to English class! I look forward to a fantastic semester together. I hope to see you here every day, on time and prepared to work well, learn and enjoy yourself. I try my best to bring in fun activities for us to do together and to make this semester a positive experience for everyone. I'm here to support you, so please don't feel shy if you need some extra help or if you have any concerns you want to share.

My name is Leah Mauer, but that's Ms. Mauer for you. My last name is pronounced Mao-er, just like Joe Mauer the baseball player. It is a German name, which is where my father's family is from, but I also have some Romanian and British heritage as well.

If you don't recognize me, that's because this is my first semester at Newtonbrook. I've taught at several other schools in the TDSB over the past few years, including Earl Haig, East York, Western Tech, and Rosedale Heights. I'm very excited to be here at Newtonbrook; this school has a great vibe and I feel privileged to be a part of it. I can tell that there are many ways to get involved in this school, and I encourage you to take advantage of these opportunities; they are a great way to meet new friends who have similar interests as you, and to make a lasting impact on the community you are a part of.

Before moving to Toronto, I lived in many other parts of Ontario including Ottawa, London and Hamilton. I studied at the University of Western Ontario where I majored in History and English, and I grew up in a small suburb of Hamilton called Dundas with my mother, father and younger brother. My brother's name is Daniel and he just finished his degree in Music at Western last June.

In my spare time, I like to read, watch movies, cook and shop. I'm always looking for great new books and recipes, so if you have any suggestions I'd love to hear them! My favourite book of all time is Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird*, and two of my favourite movies are *Ferris Bueller's Day Off* and *The Breakfast Club*. I also enjoy watching the news and reading about politics and history.

I'm really concerned about the way people treat each other in our world. It worries me to hear about violence on the streets of Toronto and throughout our country, as well as the policies of some governments to inflict cruelty on their citizens. I hope that we can talk about why this happens and some ways we can all work toward understanding each other this term.

I would really enjoy learning more about each of you as well. Please take a few moments to write back to me. Tell me about yourself, your family, interests, goals for the future, and concerns. Try to write one paragraph on each topic with a minimum of 3 paragraphs. I'm very much looking forward to spending this semester with you and to learning more about each and every one of you. Remember, I am always here for you if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,